where the light glows by beansie

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When a snowstorm knocks their power out, Will doesn't want to sleep on his own. Mike doesn't seem to mind.

where the light glows

Author's Note:

> from an anonymous prompt on tumblr, "stop hogging all the blankets!"
>
> title from *city of black and white* by mat kearney

There were very few times in his life that Will ever regretted moving to New York. He loved everything about the city, about his school, about living with his best friend. He loved being able to walk everywhere, he loved that his classes were fun but challenging, a sharp contrast to anything at Hawkins High, and he especially loved his apartment, courtesy of a substantial scholarship from the kind people at Hawkins National Laboratory. Living away from home was its own sort of difficult, and some days were tough, but all in all, Will thrived being away from Hawkins. He had Mike living with him. He had Jonathan living in Brooklyn, just a short cab ride away. He had his mother's boundless love, which he was reminded of every time he called her.

He did not, for one moment, truly doubt his decision until the March of 1993.

Indiana was not, by any account, a tropical climate, and Will was not an unreasonable person. He did not expect a lot from the month of March; perhaps some sunny, almost-spring days that teased the warmth of the next few weeks, but nothing outrageous. He did not expect pool weather, or even to have to leave the house without a coat most days. He did, however, absolutely expect to not be frozen in his apartment with no power, no heat, and no hope of leaving for at least the next three days.

They were calling it the storm of the century—or they were, at least, until their power went out and they couldn't watch the news anymore. Mike had dug out his old hand crank radio from somewhere high in a closet, but after winding it in turns for nearly half an hour, the battery had only stayed alive for five minutes, and they hadn't managed to find the right station in that time.

“Now how are we gonna know if class is cancelled?” Will had joked, sighing as the static of the radio died out.

“If any of our professors can make it to class in this weather, I’ll let them fail me.” Mike shrugged, sounding exactly like the college senior he was. “I don’t care. They earned it.”

The electricity had cut off sometime midday, when the snow was nearing a foot high, but the sun reflecting off the snow had kept the apartment bright enough. Mike had lit candles later in the afternoon, which added little warmth but enough light to move around without crashing into their furniture. It was a quiet day, mainly consisting of catching up on schoolwork with their extra time. Will threw himself into the painting he was working on for his portfolio, desperately trying not to think about the obvious issue and desperately hoping that, by some miracle, the power would be back on before bedtime.

Will didn’t need to be told how absolutely childish and ridiculous it was to be nearly twenty-one and to still sleep with a nightlight. He knew perfectly well that he had nothing to fear in the dark. He didn’t live in Hawkins anymore, the shadow monster was gone, and he had zero reason to think anything would happen to him if he fell asleep without a light on. Will was an entirely logical person who knew nothing would happen that night, regardless of how dark his room would be. He was fine. He was fine. He was *fine*.

His hands were shaking when the sun sunk below the horizon, enough that he had to put his paints away for fear of messing something up. It wasn’t a good idea to paint in the low light, anyway. Soon after, Mike announced that he was ready for bed and picked up a candle to take into the bathroom with him, leaving Will by himself in the living room. Will curled up with a blanket in front of their propane heater, hating how stupid he was being, and willed his breathing to return to normal.

“Hey,” Mike said, exiting the bathroom a few moments later. “I left the candle in there if you wanna go brush your teeth.”

Will raised his head, probably looking exactly as pathetic as he felt. “Mike,” he croaked, his throat dry.

It took Mike less than a second to realize what was happening. “Will,” he said, walking forward with arms outstretched. “Hey. It’s okay. You can sleep in my room tonight.” He gripped Will’s shoulders tightly and gave them a small shake.

Will blinked, looking at him with wide eyes. There were several things he wanted to say, but he couldn’t seem to get any of them out. He wanted to protest, say he was an adult that would be fine sleeping one night on his own. He wanted to thank Mike for never, ever making him feel like a burden, even though he was so incessantly needy. He wanted to cry. “Okay,” he finally managed. “Okay. Thanks, Mike.”

“Sure,” said Mike casually. “Just go brush your teeth before the candle goes out.”

Will obliged, and Mike moved the heater into his room and turned it up, insisting on getting the most out of of it before they had to turn it off. They didn’t have enough gas to last them the rest of the week if they kept it running overnight, and it was a fire hazard, anyway. Will gathered all of the blankets in the apartment and dumped them on Mike’s bed, spreading them out evenly across his mattress, and Mike shut the heater off with a mournful look. They clambered in quickly on either side of the bed, a candle on both night stands, and settled into the freezing sheets.

“Thanks again, Mike,” said Will, shifting a little to try and warm up the sheets.

“Yeah, no problem,” said Mike. “This is better, anyway. I was gonna let you take the heater, but this way we didn’t have to argue about it.”

Will’s eyebrows furrowed. “It’s your heater. I wouldn’t have taken it.”

“Yeah, but you hate the cold, so I wouldn’t have taken it,” Mike said with a shrug. “So it’s good, because now we can share it.”

It wasn’t worth the argument, Will told himself, and he did his best to resist the urge to insist that he absolutely would not have taken Mike’s heater. “Yeah, it’s good. Thanks, Mike,” he said instead,

muffling a yawn.

“Are you gonna fall asleep soon?” Mike asked.

“Probably.”

“Okay, good. I’ll stay up and then I’ll just blow out the candles once you’re asleep.”

Will paused, a frown forming. “You don’t have to do that.”

“It’s fine. I’m not that tired. I don’t mind.” Mike had been yawning for half an hour before he got ready for bed, so Will didn’t believe that one for a second.

“Mike, come on. I’ll be fine.” Which was a lie, really, because the only reason he was in Mike’s room in the first place was because he was too much of a baby to sleep in his own room without a nightlight.

“I really don’t mind, I promise,” said Mike, in an earnest tone that made Will feel even more guilty. “Just go to sleep.”

“How am I supposed to sleep with all this pressure on me?”

“There’s no pressure!” Mike insisted. “Just relax.”

Will sighed. “I’m not gonna be able to relax now. You go to sleep.”

“Will.”

“*Mike*.”

“It’s fine,” he said in his gentle, just-for-Will voice. “Go to sleep.”

Will groaned and sat up, blowing out the candle on his side table. He turned to Mike, looking determined. “Blow that one out,” he said, pointing to the other candle on the other nightstand.

Mike gave him an exasperated look. “Will, come on. I don’t mind.”

“I do. I won’t be able to relax with you worrying about me. Blow it out.”

“I won’t be able to relax while I’m worrying about you!” Mike protested.

“Then stop worrying. I don’t need you to.”

“*You* stop worrying and go to sleep.”

Will groaned and leaned over Mike, shoving him down into the bed. He blew the candle out with an overdramatic huff and threw himself back on his side of the bed. He heard Mike release a small sigh behind him. Will hated snapping at Mike, but Mike also knew that he hated being babied. He grabbed onto the pillow and mashed in into a more comfortable shape.

“Good night, Will,” said Mike.

“’Night, Mike.”

It was darker than he expected, which he chided himself for, because it was only dark due to his stubbornness. But he couldn’t exactly admit to that, so he settled himself under the blankets and closed his eyes, forcing himself to focus on the familiar, comforting scent of Mike’s bed instead of the heavy darkness surrounding them.

He drifted into a restless sleep.

Will was awoken by a tugging sensation on his side, insistent and annoying. He made a whiny sound in the back of his throat, trying to will the feeling away with his sleep-addled mind.

“Will,” he heard Mike murmur. “Stop hogging all the blankets.”

Will blinked twice, trying to process what was happening. It took him a moment, but he finally groaned, “There’s like seven blankets, Mike.” As if to prove a point, he buried his head under one of them.

“Yeah, and you’re hogging all of them.” Mike tugged again, more forcefully than before, and the large mass of blankets covering him slid to the side, leaving half of his body exposed.

“Hey!” he cried, grabbing onto the edge of the pile. “Now you’re hogging them.”

“Shit, sorry,” Mike sighed, his voice still groggy with sleep. “It’s too heavy. Every time we move all the blankets come with us. You rolled over in your sleep and left me exposed to the elements out here.” He did his best to rearrange the sheets so that they sat evenly on top of the two of them again.

“Well, then this isn’t gonna work,” said Will, but he pulled the corners on his side up anyway. “If one of us rolls again, we’re gonna be frozen half to death. This weather is so stupid. It’s almost spring, it should be warm,” he whined, burrowing underneath the covers, leaving just his eyes peeking out. “Maybe we should just split them up and each take half.”

“Fuck no, are you kidding?” Mike asked. “I’m already on the verge of hypothermia. I can’t handle even less blankets.”

“Maybe we should just turn the heater on, then.”

Mike paused for a moment, mulling it over. “Honestly, I’m less concerned about running out of gas and more worried that Mr. Giordano is gonna know that we left it on all night and he’s gonna come and kill us for having a fire hazard in his apartment.”

Will blinked, entirely too tired to process what he was saying. “Mike. Our landlord isn’t gonna murder us.”

“Whatever. Better idea,” Mike sidetracked. “Come here.”

“What?”

“Come here,” he said again, and he grabbed Will’s waist without further warning, pulling him towards the center. “If we’re closer, we won’t pull the blankets off each other,” he said, sounding sort of proud.

Will didn’t exactly know what to do, face to face with Mike in his bed. Mike’s hands lingered around on his hips for just a moment too long. Will tried to pretend he didn’t notice. He must not have looked as calm as he was trying to convince himself he was, because Mike asked in a concerned voice, “Okay?”

It wasn’t the first time they shared a bed, nor was it the first time

they were so *close* to each other. It wasn't uncommon for Mike to swing his legs onto Will's lap during Seinfeld marathons, or for Will to ask for a long hug after a tough day. So it wasn't necessarily out of the ordinary for them to huddle together like this, all things considered. They did this kind of stuff all the time. It wasn't *weird*, there was nothing meaningful about this, and Will would keep telling himself that until he believed it.

"Yeah," said Will. "I'm okay."

"Okay." Mike yawned, blinking back his tiredness, and he smiled blearily down at Will. Will gave a tentative smile back. There was a pause, a brief moment filled with something Will couldn't name, before Mike inhaled. "Actually, better idea." With that, he reached for Will's waist again, simultaneously pulling him closer and twisting him so he faced the other way. "Body heat," he said, his voice a little stretched. He stumbles over his words a bit. "And this way, no one will roll."

Oh. *Oh*. Okay. They weren't facing each other anymore, but it was somehow more intimate this way, with Mike's arms around him but his hands hovering a little unsteadily in front of them. Will could feel the hesitation in Mike's movements, the lack of his usual assuredness, and it hit him suddenly: this was new, this was different, and this was making Mike nervous. He was making Mike nervous.

It was sort of thrilling, the idea of Mike not knowing what to do for once in his life. Will reveled in it a tiny bit, allowing it to settle his own nerves. He didn't have to be worried about the fact that he was, by all accounts, now snuggling with his best friend, because Mike was too nervous to do anything unpredictable, anyway. Will smiled to himself, and Mike finally let his hands relax, brushing up against Will's stomach.

Will gasped, not expecting the sudden movement, and found himself shrinking away from them. "Your hands are *cold*."

"I know, I know, sorry," Mike said, a twinge of tenseness to his words. "It's 'cause you left me exposed out here."

"Sure," said Will, biting back his grin, "blame it on me and not this

ridiculous weather."

"Hey, whose idea was it to move to New York?"

"Whose idea was it to follow me?" Will shot back.

"Yeah, yeah," said Mike dismissively, lovingly, and Will could hear his warm smile in every syllable. He settled back down, placing his hands a careful distance from Will. "Still worth it."

The words sent a flutter through his heart, a soft reminder that even after everything, Mike still didn't think of him as a burden, that he too never regretted his decision to move to New York, that he wanted to be here just as much as Will wanted him here. Will had to stop himself from doing something stupid, like crying, or turning around and kissing Mike senseless.

"Here," said Will instead, finding Mike's hands with his own. In a rare and sudden burst of confidence, he slid his hands over the back of Mike's, lacing their fingers together. "Body heat," he said, shocked at how calm he sounded, considering the rate at which his heart was beating. He pulled Mike's hands towards him, settling them on his stomach.

He heard Mike behind him, trying to speak but struggling to find words. Will held perfectly still, a little unsure if he had actually found the courage to do that or if he was still asleep, dreaming this entire thing up. After a moment, he felt Mike exhale and start to relax, pulling Will closer, tangling their legs together, resting his chin on top of his head.

It was almost too hot, buried beneath seven blankets and wrapped in his best friend's arms, but Will allowed it to engulf him, to pour over him, to coax him back to sleep. He basked in the warmth of their almost-something, of whatever this was, and fell into in wholeheartedly. He would take this. It was enough for now.

"You're right," said Will, as Mike stroked a soft thumb along the back of his hand, "this is better."

Author's Note:

thanks for reading! i'm still taking prompts over on my tumblr, feel free to send some!